

Letter from Becky Osbun Lauderdale
Fort Wayne, IN
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My Experience While Voting Was a Pleasure and Privilege

I would like to answer Geralyn Miller's question, posed in her May 11 guest column, "Is this anyway to vote?" Geralyn, election day was a most enjoyable experience for me, from sunup to sundown.

I awoke at 6 a.m. to the infernal buzz of my alarm clock, vowing as I do everyday to replace it with a radio alarm. I peeked out the window to find it was rather gloomy-looking and remembered that, yep, rain had been forecast for the entire day. I went downstairs to pour myself some juice and popped some cinnamon-swirl bread into the toaster while silently thanking heaven for Pepperidge Farm, the rain (for the geraniums planted the afternoon before); and for the fact I wasn't one of the precinct workers who surely must have risen at least two hours earlier to ready the polls for the rest of us.

At 7 a.m., I went to my newly assigned polling place at the Edelweiss Reception Hall on Elmhurst Drive, thinking, "What a nice place to vote and just a few blocks from home!" Like you, I was told my "name wasn't in the book;" but because there were two precincts in the same buildings here and there in the county this year, "sure enough" I was excitedly told that I was "included" in the other book." I wasn't perturbed, just grateful to be able to vote.

I found everyone there to be gracious and helpful, including having the door opened for me on entering and exiting—a real kindness, considering my having to fumble with that contrary umbrella I should have thrown out *last* spring.

Next up, a 9 a.m. appointment in the Metro Building, carrying the thought with me that perhaps the drudgery of handling a personal legal matter would be offset by a chance meeting with our esteemed former mayor—but, doggone it, apparently neither meeting was meant to transpire that day! I'll just have to hold onto that possibility for another day and time, yes?

My last appointment to honor was at 1:30 p.m., Geralyn, at the Voter Registration Office. A dear person had alerted me the week before to the Election Board's need for couriers, and I'd eagerly volunteered. What an eye-opening good time I had! The bustling activity, the perfectly coordinated staff with precise maps and materials for us and the general air of excitement that permeated the entire place! We couriers were given careful, general instructions, and then I was directed to go to give polling places in outlying towns.

What they didn't alert me to was that I would have such pleasure meeting and being warmly greeted by so many nice folks. Or find simple pleasure in driving down quiet country roads in the misting rain between polling places. I couldn't have anticipated

either the gorgeous rainbow while driving through Poe and Hoagland or finding a banquet-size table full of homemade cookies and brownies at the Fairview Church of God in Yoder: “Don’t mind if I do; thank you very much!”

The day reminded me that this is the true heart of what it means to live in Allen County, Geralyn, and what being a Hoosier is all about. Don’t judge us as being “dangerous close” to any other major city, because we never have been and never will be.

There is a simple but lovely plaque above a doorframe in my home that reminds me as I exit every day to “Live well. Love much. Laugh often.” (Yes, even as I, too, am told the hundredth blonde joke.) You can buy one just like it for a measly \$5 at any Family Dollar store. But still the best bargain anywhere in the country is the privilege of being able to vote. However, it continues to baffle me why so few people take advantage of this hard-won right and why still others nitpick and criticize the ordinary Joes and Joans who dedicate long hours and concerted efforts enabling us to do so.